

Besides Diamonds, Furs Are a Gal's Best Friend

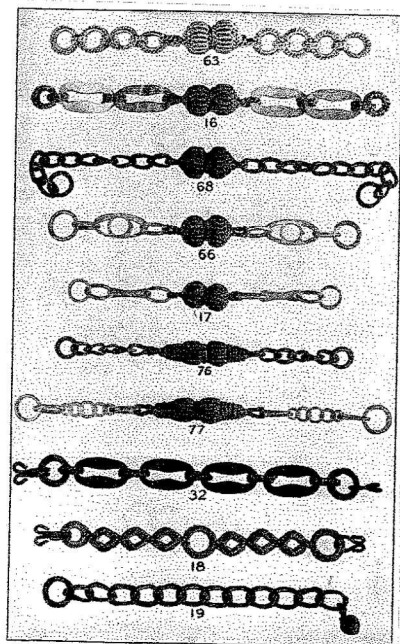
By Patti Jones



*Two Skin
Stone Marten*

The following 5 pages are different articles about furs of the Model A Era. Each article gives the reader an idea of the broad spectrum of styles and furs that were worn during the era.

It should be noted that not all four feet were necessary on a fur scarf. In addition, various fasteners were used, like the ones below, or simply, the mouth of the fur was like a clothespin, that could clip to the tail of itself.



BEIGE FOX CHOKER

Keeping Warm and in Style

By Patti Jones

(Taken from Woman's World Magazine, Dec. 1931)

Fur coats and pieces have been a "girl's best friend" when it comes to style and practicality during the Model A era. Whether you're on a night on the town or riding in the rumble seat, furs have been overwhelming a trend in women's fashions. The selection of color is emphasized as to the wearer's use of fur and was considered equally important to clothing materials.



Browns and blacks lead the list of the most popular colors. With browns, there is an array of various colors to match and complement the wearer's attire. Mink is starting to become more prominent over fox. Other furs being introduced in browns are seal and muskrat. Pelts of seals are now being dyed a "logwood brown" that is currently the rage. With a Hudson seal pelt, it is often dyed black on top showing a brown color underneath. This gives the entire coat a brownish cast. Beaver is another fur, in that it can be dyed in various colors of brown. This year, Persian lamb has made a comeback in popular colors of black and platinum.

Many coats are trimmed with contrasting color, texture and depth; using another fur other than the main body of the coat. Seal coats are frequently trimmed with mink or ermine, and later dyed in various brown tones. Persian lamb coats are trimmed with silver fox dyed in various colors. It was noted that leopard or ocelot were discouraged as being too conspicuous to wear. The old faithful raccoon coat is still considered one of the favorites because of its highly rated wearing quality.

Following the general trend of fashions, fur coats are now being made increasing the width above the waistline, but close fitting at the hips. Collars and sleeves are seeing a trend to complement the new styles. Collars are varied in type, but the most popular are collars that stand up on the shoulders and at the back of the neck. The previous style was drooped over the "arms eye". Sleeves set the style for many coats, and the dolman sleeve is the most popular. Other styles are muff sleeves and leg o' mutton sleeve. The raglan sleeve is used more for sporty fur coats. The length of the fur coat is also very important. Coats are worn longer in 1931 than in the past, giving the wearer a more slandering affect. This year, a number of lengths have been introduced...classed as three quarter lengths, these fall anywhere from the hips to just below the knees.

The cost of any fur coat depends on the quality of the skins, the amount of labor required for detailing the coat, and the demand of the particular fur. The least expensive coats are made from muskrat. When purchasing a fur coat at a swap meet or antique store, first look at if there are any breaks in the skins....if its brittle, DON'T BUY IT!! This indicates that the skin has lost its oils and will continue to break. If you see a break between the skins, the silk threads that sewed the skins together have rotted. A furrier can repair it, but the cost may override your decision to buy it. Please remember not to store any furs in plastic bags. They're a natural fiber and need to breathe. My suggestion would be an old 100% cotton sheet or pillowcase or in an acid free box. (Too bad I don't practice what I preach!)

Era Furs

By Patti Jones

(Taken from Herman and Ben Marks
Wholesale fur catalog, Dated 1929-1930)

Compared to today, it was the animal rights activists who were extinct during the Model A era. It was commonplace to see the well-dressed woman wearing or carrying some sort of animal fur. Fur coats could have buttons or no buttons, and were hand-held closed. There was a vast array of furs that were used in coats, Examples above are: (A) beaver coat, with the collar and cuffs trimmed with Russian Fitch. In a "Fur Names" dictionary, dated 1927, a Fitch was also called a POLECAT! It was of the weasel family. (B) This coat is made of Japanese Mink (dyed weasel) with a self-trimmed shawl collar and cuffs. (C) The ever popular sporty raccoon coat with a self trimmed Johnny collar and cuffs.



Fur scarves were made from natural or dyed fox, wolf, squirrel, mink, Fitch, or marten. Dyed foxes came in a variety of colors; black, brown, beige, and white, the hardest to find. Natural colors were silver tipped and red. Scarf examples above are: (D) stone martin; (E) silver tipped fox; (F) red fox. You could order 1 or 2 skin scarves from this wholesale company. In addition, they produced all year round and offered repairing and restyling.

Furs to Keep You Warm and Stylish

By Patti Jones

(Taken from Herman and Ben Marks,
Detroit Wholesale catalog, 1929-1930)

(A) The first selection is a black New Zealand seal coat dyed Coney (black). The latest rage is the self-trimmed "Johnny" collar and cuffs. The coat comes with covered buttons or held closed as shown.

(B) This coat is the same as (A) but trimmed in squirrel, which shows off the collar and sleeves.

(C) A slightly different style and fur is this Russian Pony dyed cocoa. This style has its collar and cuffs trimmed in fox, with a side closure of 2 buttons.

(D) A selection of natural northern silver muskrat with a brown fox collar and self-trimmed cuff sets off the many rows of horizontal pelts.

(E) The very popular raccoon coat can be styled double-breasted as shown here, single side button, or no buttons at all. The "Johnny" collar was also available in this style, as well as the self-trimmed shawl collar pictured here.

(F) Very rare in finding now days is this black Persian lamb. It has a crush collar and fancy cuffs of genuine gray Krimmer. (Krimmer is made from lamb pelts from the Crimean peninsula of Russia.) It was advertised, under this coat "Genuine Persian lamb is decreed by Paris to be one of this year's most favored peltries for women of fashion. It is durable as well as handsome".



Winter is On Its Way

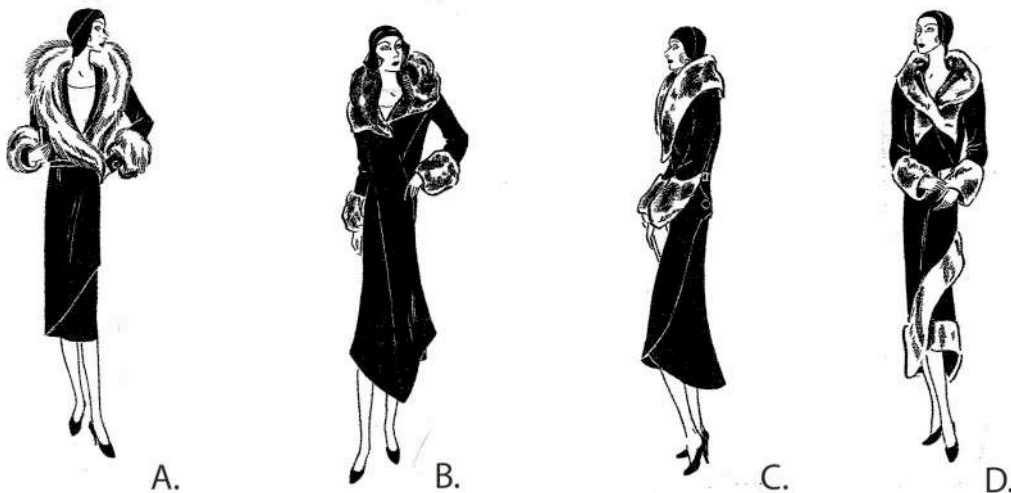
By Patti Jones

(Taken from Nov. 18, 1929 Style Sources Magazine)

While the stock market is falling, so are the temperatures outside. Because of the varying lengths in dresses, retailers are having a problem in selling coats this season. Shop owners have instructed their sales people to ask the shopper what length of dress they prefer wearing. For the new, fashionable, longer daytime dress, a $\frac{3}{4}$ length coat is more appropriate.

“The outlook for Fall is pretty black”, says R.H. Macy & Co. in a promotion of black in all its departments, even in the millinery, and lingerie. Macy’s has taken their cue from various Paris fashion houses, like Vionnet, to promote the following style of coats for the Winter of 1929. They include: a scarf coat, a bright tweed coat, an empire silhouette, the fur-bordered, the cross-fox trimmed, the low-flared, the cap, the badger, the black and two-color coats.

The coats below are the recent versions of the “wrap” coat, which was very popular with many of the NY retailers. I’ve included the prices of these coats, as I find it interesting how expensive they were back during the Depression, and that many of the retailer’s are still in existence.



- (A) This coat is an introductory 1930’s style, with a wrap around style and belted. It is trimmed in wolf, and costs \$115 from Stern brothers of NY.
- (B) Lord & Taylor introduced this jutting flare in the front coat, that is also wraps. It is trimmed in lapin (rabbit) and priced at \$89.50.
- (C) This coat has a button closure at the end of the wrap. Note that it appears to end right at the left hip of the model where the button is. It is priced at \$74.75 and sold by R.H. Macy & Co.
- (D) A stunningly trimmed belted wrap coat is considered the “coat classic of 1929-1930”. It is trimmed in lapin (rabbit) and could be purchased at Gimbel Brothers. No price was quoted.

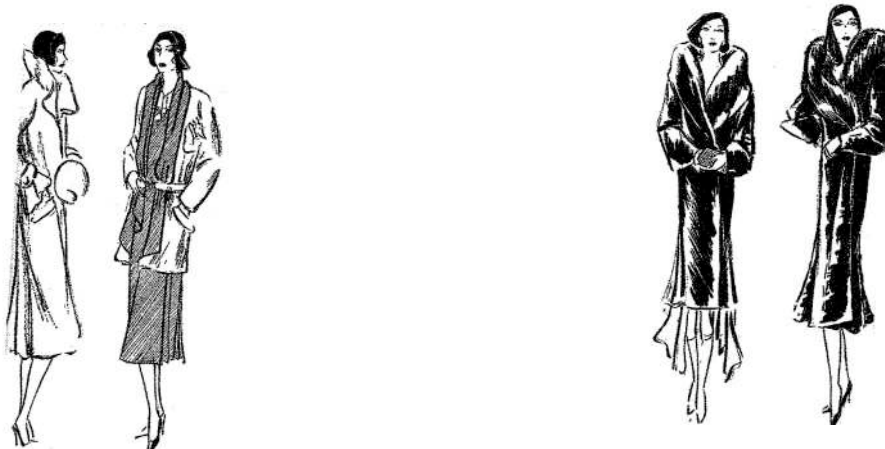
Note: All these coats are trimmed at the cuff in matching fur with the collar. In my years of buying, it is hard to find coats of this style with the fur on the cuffs in good condition. In many cases, the fur has been worn away down to the pelt. Trying to match fur from the era is also very difficult. Many were man-made, or dyed from less desirable furs (rabbit/squirrel), and given a fancy name like lapin (rabbit).

Furs and Coats for 1929

By Patti Jones

(Taken from Style Sources, Nov. 18, 1929)

During this period, the various retailers were promoting Black Furs. The retailers were “pushing” black Persian lamb coats of various lengths, and trims. They were also promoting anything black from the lowly but chic lapin (rabbit) to the aristocratic mink. The length of coats was dependent on the ever-changing hemlines of our era. “Sports type of dresses ranged from 2-3 inches below the knee, making sports coats 43 inches, based on a size 16. Afternoon dresses, being longer, necessitated a 44 ½ to 45 inch length in coats. Formal afternoon coats varied in length from 44 to 47 inches, depending upon the style of the dress worn. There was a new tendency to have shorter coats, around 35 inches in length for longer, dressier costumes. The following are examples of various lengths of coats trimmed or totally in fur for the Winter of 1929.



The formal evening wrap on the left complements the uneven hemline of the evening gown by being longer in the back than front and trimmed in fox. The middle evening coat is made of white ermine and has straighter lines giving it a wide latitude of dress designs it could be worn with a short fur.

The wrap on the right is longer than the left one, giving it a new silhouette when styled with flares. This gives the irregular hemline, so popular during this period, to the coat and not the dress.



The formal afternoon coat on the left is just long enough to show the skirt’s fullness and uneven hemline. The right one shows a long formal afternoon coat, 3-5 inches below the knees and longer in sections to give an uneven hemline effect.